

URBAN LEAGUE OF ESSEX COUNTY
58 Jones Street
Newark 3, New Jersey

Please return

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Interested in an Equitable and Progressive School System in the City of Newark

FROM: Sidney Reitman, President, Board of Directors, Urban League of Essex County

SUBJECT: Request to the Board of Education for a New Vice-Principal Promotional Examination

On Tuesday, August 30, the Newark Board of Education will decide whether or not to reactivate its current controversial vice-principal list.

As president of the Urban League of Essex County, I am urging all Urban League members, and friends of the Agency to immediately write or telegraph the Board of Education requesting that: (1) a new promotional examination for vice-principals be given as soon as possible, (2) the current promotional list be permanently set aside, and (3) all valid recommendations made to the Board for improving the examination procedures and policies be incorporated in the new examination.

It is my firm belief that every agency, organization, and individual sincerely interested in a democratic and continuously progressive school system for the City of Newark will also want to express to the Board of Education the importance of expunging from its operations all question of inequity or discrimination, be they racial or personal. This being the case, I earnestly request that you immediately write or telegraph the Newark Board of Education through its president, Mr. Morris Fush, or its secretary, Mr. Arnold Hess at 31 Green Street, Newark, and ask, as outlined above, that: (1) a new examination be given, (2) the current list be permanently set aside, and (3) corrective measures in the examination procedures be initiated.

It is my considered opinion that, so long as there is any question about irregularities in the compiling of this list, any appointment made from this list will carry a stigma that will make it all but impossible for the appointee to carry out the functions of the position with dignity, respect, and effectiveness. Secondly, it would more likely than not create within the community an attitude of suspicion and distrust by a substantial segment of the population towards the Board of Education that would in the long run seriously hamper the efficient and effective operation of the Newark school system.

The basis for the non-acceptance of the current list is to be found in the facts that:

1. The Division Against Discrimination's carefully worded decision is significant, more for what it did not say than for what it said-- to wit: "The consideration of all of the evidence now before the Division suggests that allegations of racial discrimination cannot be sustained..." Apparently the Division is not so sure that its decision is beyond the proverbial "shadow of a doubt."
2. Twenty-nine mathematical errors, peculiar statistical procedures, and presumptuous leniency with some candidates makes this list, even after proposed corrections, suspect and unreliable.
3. The permitting of persons to take oral examinations who failed to pass in all sections of the written examination is indefensible and therefore invalidates any and all ratings arrived at through such procedures.
4. The oral examinations were conducted contrary to the Board's own rule that these examinations be tape-recorded. Why was this done?
5. The ratings of some candidates were materially aided by the giving of substantial data and information, while the chances of other candidates were affected adversely by withholding from the oral examiners similar available data and information.

6. There was utter disregard of the rule which "prohibits communication among examiners to insure independent evaluations." In this examination the Superintendent of Schools gave comments on 22 of the 52 candidates which materially influenced the examiners' scores. Those candidates of whom the Superintendent spoke well made high scores. Those on whom he made negative or no comments at all in general fared poorly.
7. Inequities were created by the fact that only 8 of the 52 candidates were examined by the full board of five examiners. Since each candidate's score was partially determined by the scoring pattern of each examiner, the final score was affected by which examiner was absent.
8. Confidentiality and anonymity of scores were violated by making candidates' scores known individually prior to their exams.
9. Impartiality was prevented and objectivity thwarted by the fact that at least two persons who appeared before promotional oral boards also served on oral boards over the same period of time.
10. Subjectivity in the evaluating of some items, such as college transcripts, was utilized when more objective procedures were possible. The absence of a uniform procedure, therefore, worked to the disadvantage of some candidates.

In light of this detailed analysis, based entirely upon the report of the Board of Education's own sub-committee, the current vice-principal list is obviously biased, whether or not there was any inherent racial discrimination, and should, therefore, be discarded.

I hope that the reasons set forth in this memorandum are sufficient to enlist your support and that you will write or telegraph immediately to the Board of Education requesting that the vice-principal's list resulting from the 1958 promotional examination be set aside.